

Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative Program Science Subcommittee (SSc)

**18 January 2005 Meeting, 9:00 – 11:30 PM
USFWS Osuna Office Conference Room, Albuquerque, NM**

Agenda for 18 January 2005:

- Review and approval of notes from the previous SSc meetings
- Brief updates:
 - PMSc, InSC, and/or EC
 - The Long-Term Plan
 - PAP
 - Perennial pools workgroup
- FY 2005 Program proposal review process
- Problems/Priorities (if time is available):
 - Data and reports from previous MRG studies
 - Perennial Pools discussion
- Proposed agenda for next meeting

Review and Approval of Notes from the Previous SSc Meeting

- Draft notes from the previous SSc meeting were reviewed, clarifications of the edits previously discussed on the 14 Dec members were discussed and it was agreed that details in one bullet regarding concurrent human use and fish community changes in the MRG would be reduced, the discussion the expended, and the bullet instead included in the silvery minnow refuge habitat concepts papers. Lacking significant review of the notes from the last meeting, approval of both sets of notes will be finalized at the next SSc meeting.

Project Advisory Panel (PAP) Update

- The draft report from the PAP report is undergoing final edits by the PAP.
- The draft should be available for distribution to the Program technical subcommittees by next week.

Proposal Review Process

- The submittal of conflict of interests forms from TPEC members to Reclamation and update information from Reclamation to Pete both have been slower than hoped; consequently, distribution of the proposals to reviewers has be generally delayed.
- Only a few reviewers have received their proposals to review.
- Tentative TPECs review schedule: Flycatcher proposals – Feb 3, 1:00 at the COE; Silvery minnow proposals – Feb 7, 9 AM at the FWS

Problems/Priorities: Program/MRG datasets

- During the last meeting Nic indicated that he would compile a list of projects that could be included in a program database for historic activities and/or raw data; he sent a copy to Mike Marcus, who reviewed and expanded it, particularly including information for flycatchers; Nic requested that Mike ask Pete whether the documents should be distributed to the SSc.
- The SSc asked Mike to distribute the compilation for discussion at the next meeting.

Problems/Priorities: wetted refuge habitat for silvery minnows

- Discussed that the previous term used for these habitats, i.e., *perennial pools*, was unfortunate since in reality the refuge habitat being discussed could be flowing or standing water and likely not perennial; agreed that *wetted refuge habitat* might be a better term.
- Recent comments on the concepts paper seem to have the mistaken impression that GIS and additional data are currently available from FWS or elsewhere on pools that have been rescued, such detailed data are not available.
- Overall, caution is needed to not overburden rescue crews with data collection requirements. Their most important role is rescue; data collection can significantly slow the crews' progress, potentially leading to increased take.
- Discussed options for collecting water quality data from such habitats, including DO, pH, temperature; but questions arose that such data would only be "snapshot" information, and these analytes all can change dramatically during the day. Worth of such data is therefore questionable.
- Considered options for adding separate crews or expanding tasks for "river-eyes" to collect additional data from the salvaged habitats.
- Question was raised on how success of any refuge habitats would be measured. Is monitoring of minnows in the pools using seining appropriate? Would it produce excess stress on the minnows?
- Discussed need to assess predation potentials in the refuge habitat. While previous studies reported by the FWS found no indication of that predation by larger fish on minnows was occurring, in such habitats kept wet for up to 100 days, predation should be expected.
- Noted that apparently at least two FY 2005 proposals include options for developing pilot refuge habitat.
- Discussed options to address the estimators of the incidental take, this is a programmatic issue.
- Emphasized that the concepts paper is not a proposal, only a catalog of ideas and discussion points; where is this paper going?
- Mike Marcus was requested to make another revision of the paper, specifically attempting to include recent comments, and then redistribute the paper to the group for additional comments.
- At the next meeting the SSc will attempt to finalize the paper, then develop a cover memo to the InSC, attaching the concepts paper, to request that the SSc develop a targeted RFP for pilot projects and to address key research needs regarding wetted refuge habitat for silvery minnows.

Proposed Agenda for 01 February 2005 SSc Meeting, 9:00 AM, FWS on Osuna in Albuquerque:

- Review and approval of notes from the previous SSc meetings
- Brief updates:
 - PMSc, InSC, and/or EC
 - PAP
 - Silvery minnow wetted refuge habitat workgroup meeting schedule?
 - FY 2005 Program proposal reviews
- Problems/Priorities (if time is available):
 - Data and reports from previous MRG studies
 - Perennial Pools discussion
 - Power analysis of the RGSM catch data
- Proposed agenda for next meeting
 - Reclamation silvery minnow reports – egg habitat identification, constructed nursery habitat design, and fish distribution in a steep riffle
 - Agenda for the 1 March meeting: FWS – silvery minnow augmentation and Craig Boroughs – Development of sediment plugs along the Tiffany Junction Reach

**Science Subcommittee
04 January 2005 Meeting Attendees**

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